WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS,

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

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HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

COAL MINERS OF THE WORLD

Washington, March 16--From England comes the news that the British coal strike is effective and that with each succeeding hour matters are becoming more serious. Efforts are being put forth by the government to bring the operators and miners to the point where an adjustment can be reached, and apparently progress is being made, for each side has modified its original position. The estimated number of workmen affected by the British strike is approximately 2,500,000. The most perfect order is attending the strike, not a single instance being reported of any conflict anywhere in the strike zone. In Germany there are over 240,000 men out, with the situation becoming serious, owing to the rigid measures of the authorities. Germany is a typical military government and on the least provocation the military arm of the government is called into action, and is no doubt in this instance provoking disturbances. The anthracite operators and the United Mine Workers of America, while not having broken off negotiations entirely, yet the demands of the miners have been formerly rejected. The agreements extending over a large portion of the bituminous coal fields and the anthracite fields expire upon the same date. The Iowa miners are now in session and it is predicted that they will ask for an increase in wages. The outlook is not encouraging for a satisfactory agreement before the expiration of these contracts, and it appears at this time as if a cessation of work would take place on April 1, involving approximately 600,000 miners.

LOOPHOLE IN IMMIGRATION BILL

Washington, March 16--Senate bill No. 3175, entitled "to regulate the immigration of aliens and the residence of aliens in the United States", provides a loophole whereby Chinese can enter this country without let or hindrance. The American Federation of Labor submitted the bill to its attorneys for an opinion as to its meaning and in reply the attorneys in substance state "that if the pending bill becomes operative in its present form the right of Chinese to come to this country will be absolutely unrestricted." Upon receiving this opinion objection was filed with the immigration committee of the senate, protesting against the provisions contained in the bill which would permit the indiscriminate immigration of Chinese.

LABOR COMMITTEE REPORTS AGAINST TAYLOR SYSTEM

Washington, March 16--Congressman W. B. Wilson, labor's able champion in the house of representatives, and chairman of the house labor committee, has just presented to the house an unfavorable report against the Taylor and other systems of shop management. The report of the committee is unanimous and will be of inestimable value to the working people of our country. Under the guidance of Chairman Wilson a thorough and comprehensive study of efficiency systems was made. The report handles the subject in a vigorous manner, going to the root of the subject, one portion of which is hereby reproduced, its philosophy being unassailable: "There is a margin between the work performed by the loafer and the maximum task for a man, and in that margin lies a proper day's work. What constitutes a reasonable day's work can only be determined by practical experience and intelligent observation. It can not be wholly determined by a stop watch or any other time-measuring instrument used only for a brief period of time. By the stop watch you may be able to determine the time in which a piece of work can be done, but you do not thereby alone determine the length of time in which it ought to be done. The time study of the operations of any machine can be made with a reasonable degree of accuracy, because all of the elements can be taken into consideration in making the computation. A machine is an inanimate thing - it has no life, no brain, no sentiment, and no place in the social order. With a workmen it is different. He is a living, moving, sentient, social being; he is entitled to all the rights, privileges, opportunities, and respectful consideration given to other men. He would be less than a man if he did not resent the introduction of any system which deals with him in the same way as a beast of burden or an inanimate machine. In making a time study of the operations of a workman, all of the elements can not be taken into consideration and consequently the computation can not be made with mathematical accuracy. There is no work that can be performed or that is performed, that is not preceded by a mental process on the part of the workman. The more skill needed in the work, the greater the mental process which precedes the expression of it. So far as your committee has been able to learn, there is no method known to scientific management by which a time study can be made of the mental process preceding the physical act. The elements of the mental process not being susceptible of determination by a stop-watch time study, the study of itself must consequently be inaccurate and the workmen are justified in objecting to such a time study being used as a basis upon which to compute their day's work and compensation when in their judgment injustice is done them thereby."

CHAINMAKERS AND BLACKSMITHS

Washington, March 16--Two local unions of chainmakers at Columbus, Ohio, have affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers. There are a number of chainmakers' locals throughout the country that are not yet in affiliation with the blacksmiths. It is expected that these chainmakers' locals will in a very short time all be listed with the blacksmiths.

Carpenters at Leominster, Mass., have reduced hours from ten to eight and increased wages from $2.00 to $3.25 per day.

MITCHELL'S ANSWER

Defendant in Contempt Case Declines the Offer of Justice Wright for Immunity in Consideration that Apology be Forthcoming.

Washington, March 16--John Mitchell, in a letter to Justice Wright declining to avail himself of the immunity offer of the court, provided he would make certain promises, made it clear that the position which he has maintained since the inception of the contempt proceedings will be maintained to the end. Mr. Mitchell's letter follows: "Judge Wright, Sir: At the close of my cross-examination in the contempt proceedings instituted against Mr. Gompers, Mr. Morrison and me, the court stated that I was free at any time before these proceedings closed to give expression to the court, either orally or in written communication, upon the subject of the following recommendations: 'The court strongly recommends that you consider again the propriety of acquainting the court before these proceedings close with your conviction, whether you ought, and whether you expect, hereafter to lend adherence to the decrees of the judicial tribunals of the land in matters committed by law to their jurisdiction and power.' I have given the court's recommendation careful thought and serious consideration, as a result of which I desire to say that I believe a statement by me that I 'expect hereafter to lend adherence to the decrees of the judicial tribunals of the land' would be subject to no other interpretation than that I have heretofore failed or refused to comply with the lawful decrees of the court, and that my evidence in this proceeding was not truthful and sincere and in keeping with the facts in the case. I am not willing to make any statement that would impugn my own testimony. I am not willing by any device or subterfuge to attempt to deceive the court or secure an acquittal by any other means than those of the evidence and the truthfulness of my testimony. Indeed, I should feel more contentment if convicted, conscious of the rectitude of my courde and the truthfulness of my evidence, than if acquitted on any other ground than the facts as they have been presented to the court and the law as it has been enunciated by the higher tribunal. Yours respectfully, John Mitchell".

RAILWAY MEDIATORS

London, March 16--The success of Sir George Askwith as a mediator and conciliator in labor controversies has inspired the London and Northwestern Railway company to appoint an official whose duties will be analogous, but of course, confined exclusively to the affairs of the company. The duties devolving upon this official will be to receive and attempt to remedy all grievances before they become aggravated. The company now assumes to meet the complaints of the men that minor officials have been in the habit of aggravating instead of remedying. Other departments of the railway welcome this innovation, for the new position created will carry with it considerable authority to order changes wherever necessary, and thus relieve the other departments of dealing with these matters. The men employed by the railway are also pleased with this change, as they welcome any opportunity which promises a fair and reasonable consideration of their grievances without interference from petty officialdom. The new method will also guarantee to the men a more speedy consideration than was possible under former methods. It is also announced that other railroad companies are considering the establishment of a similar department.

Printers of Peoria, Ill., secured an increase of $1.00 per week.

SHIRT COMPANY OUSTED

Washington, March 16--At a meeting of the Baltimore (Md.) Jail Board recently, action was taken ousting the Hawkins Shirt Company, which now operates a contract for the labor of the inmates of the city jail. It is reported that this company is owned practically by Fred H. Mills, treasurer of the American Prison Association, director of the International Prison Congress last year, and chairman of the committee appointed by the first named organization, to report on the convict labor question. He is now, and has been since the installation of the "state use system" in New York, the sales-agent of the prison department. As such, he directs what goods are to be manufactured and how they are to be disposed of to the different state institutions and departments. Criticism has been offered on the "state use system" that it did not supply work for all the inmates. It is charged that Mills is responsible for this condition of affairs. Under this system no state department is allowed to buy any article in the open market without getting permission from the prison commissioners in the form of a certificate, which certifies that the prison department cannot supply the articles needed. It is asserted that the prison commissioners of New York delegated their power to sign certificates almost entirely to Mills, and that he has signed all but a few of the releases. Thus the "state use system" by this means has been juggled to discredit the "state use system" and provide an argument against it.

AGAINST EIGHT-HOUR DAY

Washington, March 16--A number of firms and corporations which furnish the government with various kinds of supplies, which would eventually come under the operation of the eight-hour law, have appeared before the Senate Labor Committee, protesting against the passage of the eight-hour law. The bill now before the senate committee passed the house some weeks ago. The gist of the argument presented by these firms was that it would be extremely difficult for the government to get bids if the eight-hour day was inaugurated. This view has already proven to be fallacious.

FIGHTING SWEATSHOP GOODS

Washington, March 16--The Consumers' League recently held its second exhibition of sweatshop goods in order that the people of Washington may become familiar with the conditions under which these articles are manufactured. One of the conspicuous articles on exhibition was a willow plume of immense proportion, the regular charge of a milliner being about $25. The knots in this plume numbered 2,078 and the tenement tot who tied the knots was paid 78¢ for it's labor. Many other similar pieces of work were shown.

DOCKERS RETURN TO WORK

London, March 16--The lockout of the Glasgow dockers has come to an end through the efforts of Sir George Askwith. There were many points on which there was a variance, but finally a basis was reached whereby an agreement satisfactory to all concerned was arrived at, and the men have returned to work.

SPEAKING TOUR OF CARL LEGIEN

Washington, March 16—Carl Legien, occupying the chief executive office in the federation of German unions, and also secretary of the International Secretariat, has accepted an invitation extended by the American Federation of Labor to visit this country, and deliver a number of trade union addresses. He is scheduled to arrive in New York City on Sunday, April 14. An itinerary has been arranged for a speaking tour, covering New York City, Boston, Washington, Buffalo, Toronto, Cleveland, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver and Colorado Springs. Notification and itinerary has been sent to the central bodies in the above mentioned cities in order that there may be ample time to perfect local arrangements for an address. Mr. Legiem has an international reputation and is one of the foremost labor officials of the world, and it is anticipated that his visit to this country will be of inestimable value to the trade union movement of America. The tendency in the ranks of organized labor, wherever it is dispersed, is toward a closer affiliation and a desire for a better understanding of the ideas and methods of associated workmen of the world. Mr. Legien's presence in this country at this time, a period of unusual world activities in the ranks of labor, is propitious, and should result in much benefit to the movement of our country.

AMALGAMATION TO TAKE PLACE

Washington, March 16—The general secretary of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, John G. Meiler, has remitted to the office of the American Federation of Labor the final per capita tax for that organization. In transmitting the tax Mr. Meiler informs Secretary Morrison that the terms of amalgamation agreed to between the Amalgamated Wood Workers and the Brotherhood of Carpenters have been overwhelmingly accepted by the Amalgamated Wood Workers, the vote being 1,312 for and 330 against. Thus the amalgamation between these organizations will shortly become an accomplished fact.

PATTERNMAKERS INTRODUCE REFERENDUM

Washington, March 16—The Patternmakers League of North America will hold its annual election of officers on March 28. This is the initial election by the referendum, which was adopted by the organization at its last convention. General President James Wilson is unopposed for re-election.

LABOR TEMPLE FOR FRESNO, CAL.

Fresno, Cal., March 16—Preliminary plans have been perfected for the erection of a Labor Temple in this city. The active spirits are elated over the unanimity of opinion developed among the unions for the construction of a home for organized labor.

CARDROOM WORKERS WIN

Bollington, Eng., March 16—After a strike of fourteen weeks of the cardroom operatives over a slight reduction in wages, a settlement has been effected whereby a substantial advance in the wages paid before the dispute has been secured.

REVISES ESTIMATES

Washington, March 16--Secretary Meyer appeared before the naval affairs committee of the house and admitted that some of the figures in the construction estimate submitted a year ago on battleships were incorrectly and requested to withdraw the estimate. This request came after a continuation of examination into the report of civilian experts, who declared the navy yards could be more economically operated by skilled constructors than by line officers.

TO VALUE RAILROADS

Washington, March 16--Chairman Adamson of the house commerce committee has introduced a bill providing for the valuation of all the common carriers of the United States by the interstate commerce commission, to discover the original investment and its growth. If the bill passes, holding companies and every modern industrial organization would be investigated.

DARROW TRIAL MAY 14

Washington, March 16--Clarence Darrow, former chief counsel for the McNamara brothers, will be tried on May 14 on the charge of having bribed jurors in the case referred to.

MOVEMENT LOOKING UP

Washington, March 16--In a letter received from a voluntary organizer at Cranbrook, B. C. it is stated that the movement in that city has lately received quite an impetus, several organizations having recently been formed with the outlook splendid for the addition of several more.

STRIKE SETTLED

London, March 16--The Tilbury dock strike has been settled through the intervention of the Dockers' union. The 5,000 men have all returned to work, employers agreeing in the future to recognize the organization.

MUSICIANS TO ERECT TEMPLE

Joplin, Mo., March 16--The Missouri Trades Unionist, published at Joplin, Mo., is authority for the statement that the Musicians union of that city has decided to erect a musicians' temple to cost $25,000.

TO PRINT MONEY ORDER BLANKS

Washington, March 16--It has been the custom of the government to award to outside printing firms contracts for certain classes of work. The public printer has contended that all government printing should be done in its own printing establishment. As a result of t is contention the millions of money order forms which have previously been printed outside the big establishment will for the next four years be done by the government itself. The printing of these forms amount to bout $150,000 per year.

BILL AGAINST BLACKLISTING

Washington, March 16—A bill to protect railway employes in their organizations from injustice at the hands of their employers through blacklisting or threats of dismissal has been introduced in the lower house by Congressman Stevens of Minnesota. The bill is proposed as an amendment to the interstate commerce act, and provides that any employer who shall require any employe to enter into an agreement, either written or verbal, not to become or remain a member of any labor organization or because he will not withdraw from any such organization or shall discharge any employe for non-compliance with employer's wishes, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall pay a penalty of not less than $100 nor more than $1000 for each offense. The measure also forbids employers endeavoring to force employes to contribute to any fund for charitable or other purposes, and also from conspiring to prevent former employes securing other employment after they have been discharged.

RAILWAY WORKERS' WAGES

London, March 16—A board of trade report just issued contained statistics relative to wages on railways. It appears from the report that on railways, other than electric, employes are usually six-day workers, Sunday duty being paid for as overtime or equivalent time given off during the week in lieu of payment. The number of male time workers paid wages in the last pay week of October, 1907, included in the returns, is 401,437, and the average rate of wages as follows: Adult workmen, average wages, 24s-4d; lads and boys, 11s-3d. On electric railways the rate of pay appears to have been slightly better than ordinary railways, the earnings being for motormen, 38s-10d; mechanics, 36s-8d; signal men, 31s-11d; platelayers, 28-10d; conductors 24s-7d.

"PROFESSIONAL" STRIKE THREATENED

London, March 16—The doctors who, before the insurance act was passed, were content to accept club patients at 2s-6d per head, have now presented an ultimatum to the insurance commissioners. They demand a minimum fee of 8s-6d, together with the power of hearing and determining all complaints against themselves, and unless these demands are granted they threaten to go on strike. What would the public say to the workmen should they go on strike for such conditions? The doctors, however, can be cut out of the act altogether, and the money thus saved devoted to increasing sick pay or other purposes.

PENSION FOR INJURED CLERKS

Washington, March 16—A bill providing for the pensioning of civil service employees who are injured in line of service has been introduced by Congressman Howland of Ohio. The measure provides that all employes making less than $3000 per annum, as well as employes of the Isthmian Canal and Panama Railway and Steamship line, shall be compensated at stated rates for injury or death while in such employment. The secretary of commerce and labor is given the right to determine whether or not the complaint for pension is entitled to compensation. The measure has been referred to the judiciary committee.

Bill posters have advanced wages 50 cents per day at Savannah, Ga., without strike.

I. T. U. NOMINATIONS

Washington, March 16--Secretary Treasurer Hays has sent out a list of nominees and nominators for the various positions to be filled at the next referendum election of the International Typographical Union. The following contains a list of the candidates for the principal offices and the number of nominations they have received: For president, James M. Lynch, 301; Fred Barker, 143. Vice-President, George A. Tracy, 245; James M. Duncan, 169. Secretary-treasurer, J. W. Hays, 331; Clifford M. Cobb, 92; James B. Ross, 22. Delegates to the American Federation of Labor, Frank Morrison, 371; Max S. Hayes, 246; T. W. McCullough, 223; Hugh Stevenson, 221; Charles Hertenstein, 179; Frank J. Bonnington, 90; Daniel Delahoyde; 81; A. B. Rodriguez, 71; Franklin W. Hynes, 20; John H. Ferguson, 13.

BRICKLAYERS TO VOTE ON AFFILIATION

Washington, March 16--At the last convention of the Bricklayers and Masons favorable action was again taken to submit the question of affiliation with the American Federation of Labor to a referendum vote of the membership. The entire western section of the country is practically unanimous in favor of affiliation, and is using every influence to secure favorable action when the vote is taken. The national officers of the Bricklayers and Masons have for years expressed themselves as favorable to affiliation, but the membership has thus far refused to become a part of the general movement by affiliation. The prospects at this time are brighter for favorable action than at any period heretofore.

CONTEMPT CASE NEAR CLOSE

Washington, March 16--As the News Letter is being prepared for the mails, the contempt case is nearing its close. Most of the arguments before the full bench of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia have been made, and undoubtedly the case will finally be closed Saturday, March 16, and then it will be up to the court to pronounce its decision in the matter.

ALLEGED CONSPIRACY CASES SET

Washington, March 16--The men charged with violating the federal laws growing out of the McNamara case have been arraigned before the federal court in Indianapolis, Ind., and all have entered a plea of not guilty and the trial of the cases set for October next. An effort is being made to have the cases consolidated.

LAWRENCE STRIKE ENDS

Washington, March 16--The strike of the textile workers at Lawrence, Mass., has come to and end. Increases in wages range from 5% to 20% and all employes are to be given their former places.

Plumbers of Fort Worth, Texas, secured an advance of 50 cents per day this year and will have another 50 cents increase the two years following, this including every shop in the city.

BUTTON MANUFACTURERS IN STRAITS

Davenport, Ia., March 16--The Hawkeye Button Company at Muscatine is endeavoring to start a plant in this city, and is advertising for employes. This is one of the non-union outfits that has endeavored to destroy the Button Workers' union in Muscatine. The fact that the company is endeavoring to establish a plant outside of Muscatine is evidence that the button workers' strike is effective. Previously, numerous efforts have been made to start button cutting plants outside of Muscatine, but all attempts have thus far resulted in failure.

PHONY INJUNCTION BILL

Washington, March 16--The period of introducing phony injunction bills has arrived. Congressman Moon of Pennsylvania has just introduced an alleged injunction limitation bill which represents the Taft idea. It makes legal the present abuse of the courts in arbitrarily issuing injunctions in labor disputes, and only prescribes that speedy hearings be given on restraining orders issued on the spur of the moment. The Moon bill can be classed as simply a campaign scheme for consumption by the Congressman's constituents at home.

AFTER WAGE SWEATERS

London, March 16--The trades boards act has now been extended to the notoriously sweated industry, the boxmaking trade. A minimum rate of 3d per hour has been fixed, with 52 hours per week, making a weekly wage of 13s. This seems an extremely small wage, yet it is a large advance over the miserable pittance which has been paid heretofore by employers, who have taken advantage of the helplessness of women workers.

REFERENDUM ON TAX LAWS

Washington, March 16--A referendum vote on all Kentucky tax laws passed in the next five years, with both initiative and referendum in such legislation thereafter, is provided for in the tax revision bill which recently passed the lower house of the Kentucky legislature.

REFERRED TO LABOR COMMITTEE

Washington, March 16--The bill, H. R. 21094, to create a commission on industrial relations, on motion of Mr. Hughes of New Jersey, was taken from the committee on rules and referred to the committee on labor by unanimous consent.

CORSETMAKERS' STRIKE

Kalamazoo, Mich., March 16--Over 700 employes in the Kalamazoo Corset company have struck over the summary discharge of a number of employes whom, it is claimed, were dismissed because of activity in union affairs.

After a lockout of twenty months of the mill and lumbermen a settlement has been reached and the mills will hereafter operate with union men at San Mateo, Cal.

STRIKE CALLED OFF

Washington, March 16--The metal trades strike against the contract shops of Los Angeles, which has been in progress for nearly two years, has been called off. An agreement has been reached between the officials of the molders, machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths and patternmakers' union and the officials of the Founders and Employers' association. All of the men who went out are to return to work as fast as conditions warrant. The outcome is a great victory for the metal trades.

OUTLOOK GOOD

Anniston, Ala., March 16--This city is progressing rapidly so far as organized labor is concerned. In the early part of this year the iron molders were organized, with a good membership, and the barbers have just formed a local union. Other organizations are in process of formation.

FOR REFERENDUM PETITION

Fort Worth, Tex., March 16--The union men of this state are actively engaged in securing signers to a petition to have the initiative, referendum and recall provisions placed upon the primary ballot to be taken in July. It will be necessary to secure 40,000 signatures, and must be done by counties, the county tax collectors to attest the qualification of each signer. It is practically assured that sufficient signatures will be obtained.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Washington, March 16--The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization has just issued its November (1911) immigration bulletin. During that month there were admitted 61,765 aliens. The largest number came from southern Italy, 10,025; Hebrews, 7,317; Germans, 5,410; Polish, 4,590; English, 3,988; northern Italians, 2,618 ; the balance coming from twenty or thirty other countries. During the last five months there have been admitted into this country 295,629 aliens, there having been only 5,254 debarred and returned to their home countries.

CLOAKMAKERS WIN

Philadelphia, March 16--After a contest extending over three months the Cloakmakers' union has won its strike against a local firm. The agreement reached calls for the union shop and other conditions entirely satisfactory to the union.

AFTER EIGHT-HOUR DAY

Birmingham, Ala., March 16--The federated shop trades on the Southern railway and allied lines have concluded to make an effort to establish the eight hour day upon the expiration of the present agreement on April 1st. The sentiment among the shop is practically unanimous in favor of the shorter work day.

Cement workers have recently organized in Cincinnati, Detroit, Dallas and Worcester, Mass.